This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (currently amended) A method for combining independent scene layers to form computer generated environments, comprising the steps of:

   constructing a terrain layer using stored terrain data;

   generating a feature layer using feature layer data that is <u>configured to be modified independently and</u> stored separately from the stored terrain data; and

   combining the feature layer and the terrain layer to form a composite environment.

2. (original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising the step of rendering the composite environment for viewing.

3. (original) A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of generating a feature layer further comprises the step of generating a plurality of feature layers that are configured to be combined together with other feature and terrain layers.

4. (original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising the step of determining the locations of features in the feature layer in reference to the terrain layer.

5.-38.(cancelled)

39. (new) A method as in claim 2, wherein the step of rendering the composite environment for viewing further comprises the step of resolving conflicts between layers.

40. (new) A method as in claim 2, wherein the step of rendering the composite environment for viewing further comprises the step of applying different run-time response rules to the terrain layer and the feature layer.

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41. (new) A method as in claim 1, further comprising the step of defining different run-time response rules for the terrain layer and the feature layer.

42. (new) A method as in claim 41, wherein the step of defining different run-time response rules for the terrain layer and the feature layer further comprises providing a level-of-detail control for the terrain layer and a separate level-of-detail control for the feature layer.

43. (new) A method as in claim 41, wherein the step of defining different run-time response rules for the terrain layer and the feature layer further comprises specifying a field-of-view control for the terrain layer and a separate field-of-view control for the feature layer.

44. (new) A method as in claim 1, further comprising the steps of
    a. modifying the feature layer; and
    b. recompiling the feature layer independently from the terrain layer.

45. (new) A method for combining independent scene layers to form computer generated environments, comprising the steps of:
    c. constructing a terrain layer using stored terrain data;
    d. generating a feature layer using feature layer data that is stored separately from the stored terrain data;
    e. combining the feature layer and the terrain layer to form a composite environment; and
    f. defining a run-time response rule for the terrain layer and a different run-time response rule for the feature layer.

46. (new) A method as in claim 45, wherein the step of defining different run-time response rules for the terrain layer and the feature layer further comprises providing a level-of-detail control for the terrain layer and a separate level-of-detail control for the feature layer.

47. (new) A method as in claim 45, wherein the step of defining different run-time response rules for the terrain layer and the feature layer further comprises specifying a field-of-view control for the terrain layer and a separate field-of-view control for the feature layer.

48. (new) A method for combining independent scene layers to form computer generated environments, comprising the steps of:

      g. constructing a terrain layer using stored terrain data;

      h. generating a feature layer using feature layer data that is configured to be modified independently and stored separately from the stored terrain data;

      i. combining the feature layer and the terrain layer to form a composite environment; and

      j. defining a run-time response rule for the terrain layer and a different run-time response rule for the feature layer.

49. (new) A method as in claim 48, further comprising the step of rendering the composite environment for viewing.

50. (new) A method as in claim 49, wherein the step of rendering the composite environment for viewing further comprises the step of applying different run-time response rules to the terrain layer and the feature layer

51. (new) A method as in claim 49, wherein the step of rendering the composite environment for viewing further comprises the step of resolving conflicts between layers

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